

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 091726Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6361

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 02226

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PGOV WB AS

SUBJECT: CLOSURE OF AUSTRALIAN MILITARY MISSION IN
BERLIN

REF: USBER 225

1. THE AUSTRALIAN DECISION TO CLOSE DOWN THE MILITARY MISSION IN WEST BERLIN IS PERHAPS AN INEVITABLE FOLLOW-ON TO THE OPENING OF AN EMBASSY TO THE GDR IN EAST BERLIN. IT FOLLOWS SIMILAR ACTION TAKEN FIRST BY THE NORWEGIANS, THEN BY THE DANES AND GREEKS.

2. BECAUSE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ELEMENT PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE IN MAINTAINING THE VIABILITY OF WEST BERLIN -- A RESPONSIBILITY WHICH WE SHARE WITH THE BRITISH AND THE FRENCH, IN CLOSE COOPERATION WITH THE FRG -- USBERLIN'S CONCERN AT THE POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF A SNOWBALL EFFECT IS CERTAINLY JUSTIFIED. THE DANGER EXTENDS NOT
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JUST TO THE MILITARY MISSIONS, BUT ALSO TO THE CAREER

CONSULATES. THE TURKISH CONSULATE GENERAL, OF COURSE, HAS MAJOR CONSULAR RESPONSIBILITIES BECAUSE OF THE LARGE TURKISH WORKER POPULATION, BUT OTHERS SUCH AS THE ITALIAN CONSUL GENERAL HAVE VERY LITTLE TO DO IN WEST BERLIN, NOW THAT RESPONSIBILITY FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REPORTING ON THE GDR HAS BEEN ASSUMED BY THE NEWLY-ESTABLISHED EMBASSIES IN EAST BERLIN.

3. IN THE AUSTRALIAN CASE, WE AGREE THAT THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE LITTLE TO DO OTHER THAN EXPRESS REGRET. WE WOULD HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT THE DEPARTMENT MIGHT ASK EMBASSY CANBERRA TO REGISTER THAT REGRET IN CANBERRA AS WELL. THE AUSTRALIAN DECISION TO MAINTAIN THE MILITARY MISSION "ON PAPER" IS, OF COURSE, BETTER THAN NOTHING -- BUT NOT MUCH BETTER. REMOVAL OF THE TWO CAREER AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMATS FROM THE SCENE IN BERLIN WILL QUICKLY BE NOTICED BY THE SENSITIVE BERLINERS. CANBERRA'S VIEWS ON WHETHER THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT OPENS ANY POSSIBWLITY OF REVERSING THE DECISION WOULD BE WELCOME.

4. WE ALSO AGREE THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE FOR USBER TO APPROACH SENIOR OFFICIALS OF OTHER MILITARY MISSIONS ALONG LINES SUGGESTED PARA FOUR REFTEL. IN ADDITION, WE PROPOSE TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION IN THE BONN GROUP WITH A VIEW TO EVOKING A RECOMMENDATION FOR A JOINT US-UK-FRENCH-FRG PRESENTATION IN NATO OR IN SELECTED NATO CAPITALS, ON THE IMPORTANCE WHICH WE ATTACH TO A CONTINUING ALLIED PRESENCE IN WEST BERLIN. APPROACHES MIGHT ALSO BE CONSIDERED IN CAPITALS OF FRIENDLY NON-NATO STATES WHICH MAINTAIN CAREER CONSULATES IN WEST BERLIN IN AN EFFORT TO FORESTALL ANY POSSIBLE WITHDRAWAL OF REPRESENTATION.

5. AS BACKGROUND FOR SUCH A BONN GROUP DISCUSSION, WE WOULD APPRECIATE USBER'S CABLING OR POUCHING A STATUS REPORT ON THE NON-COMMUNIST MILITARY MISSIONS AND CAREER CONSULATES IN WEST BERLIN. (EMBASSY HAD NOT BEEN AWARE OF PROSPECTIVE CLOSURE OF GREEK MILITARY MISSION UNTIL RECEIPT OF REFTEL.)

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